



32 DAYS TO GO

Russel to open all BNS gates

SPORTS REPORTER

In a bid to bring spectators to the Big Bowl, Sheikh Russel will keep all gates of the Bangabandhu National Stadium open in their Bangladesh League home match against giants Mohammedan Sporting Club today.

The match will get underway at 4:00pm.

Sheikh Russel, the third force in the professional football league, did the same in their first leg match against Abahani though it had little impact on the turnout.

Sheikh Russel, who held Mohammedan to a goalless draw in their first meeting, have 47 points in 20 matches, five points behind of Mohammedan, who also played 20 matches.

Div I cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Dashara Nabajagan Sangsad defeated Victoria Club by five wickets in the Col (red) Malek Smriti First Division Cricket League at the Shaheed Miraz-Tapan

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PHOTO: STAR
Bangladesh forward Rasel Mahmud Jimmy (C) is sandwiched in between a host of Thailand defenders as he tries to take the ball forward. It was however Jimmy who had the last laugh as the hosts thrashed their opponents 8-1 in their first match of the Robi Asian Games Qualifiers at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Hosts' flying start

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Mamunur Rahman Chayon scored five goals that included a hatrick while Mohammad Nannu, Maksud Alam Habul and Mosharraf Hossain scored one each as Bangladesh thumped Thailand 8-1 in their Robi Asian Games Qualifiers at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh let it ease off a bit in the second half in scorching heat after totally dominating the first half with a 5-0 lead. Thailand got the consolation goal in the second half through Surasak. Chayon was adjudged man-of-the-match for his quintet, all of which came from penalty corners.

The first half was completely dominated by Bangladesh. They were playing an

ultra-attacking game, fielding almost the entire team upfront. Defenders Chayon and Asaduzzaman Chandan marshalled the quiet backline and provided long balls upfield for the forwards to pounce.

Bangladesh started the game in attacking mode and got into the score-sheet in only eight minutes. The first penalty corner of the game, Rasel Mahmud Jimmy's take, Mosharraf Hossain Kuti's push and Chayon's drag onto the top corner of the net. No chance for the keeper to stop as Bangladesh took a 1-0 lead. That same combination, or sometimes changed hands in the pusher or stopper, yielded dividends four more times during the course of the game as Chayon succeeded in converting five of the penalty corners from nine taken. Nannu made it 2-0 in the 12th minute from a goalmouth melee, followed by

another penalty corner goal from Chayon seven minutes later.

The fourth goal was another field goal finished by Habul after a darting run from Krishna inside the box from the right side.

Krishna turned the provider once again with six minutes to go for break when his pass-in was pushed in by Kuti to make it 5-0 for Bangladesh.

And it seemed like it would be more of the same in second half when the Jimmy-Kuti-Chayon combined again to convert another penalty corner.

However, since then Thailand surged some meaningful attacks as Bangladesh sat back a little. And they found a deserving goal when Surasak completed a solo effort with a beautiful diving reverse-hit that beat goalkeeper Zahid Hassan. Bangladesh though got two more back

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TIGERS' 4-DAY MATCH Pacers shine on Day One

SPORTS REPORTER

Pace bowlers took all the six wickets to fall at tea on the first day of Bangladesh's four-day first-class game against Surrey at the Oval in London yesterday.

An hour after tea, Surrey were 263-6 in 71 overs after they had chosen to bat first after winning the toss.

Newcomer Robiul Islam had the best figures, picking up three wickets while Rubel Hossain took two wickets. Mahbul Alam Robin took the other wicket that fell.

Robiul removed Laurie Evans for 22 and later went to take the wickets of debutant Tom Lincefield and wicketkeeper Gary Wilson.

Rubel got rid of captain Chris Schofield, caught by Mahmudullah Riyad, to reduce Surrey to 135 for six in the 42nd over. But the tourists seemed to run out of gas after that, as Matthew Spriegel and Stuart Meaker added 121 for the seventh wicket.

Spriegel was on 77 off 154 balls that included eight boundaries while all-rounder Meaker batted on 71 off 107 balls with the help of ten fours.

It is Bangladesh's first of three practices matches before the first Test against England starting at Lord's on May 27.

PREMIER V'BALL PDB clinch title

SPORTS REPORTER

Power Development Board (PDB) clinched their first-ever Premier League Volleyball title when they beat defending champions Bangladesh Police in straight sets at the Volleyball Stadium yesterday.

The eventual winners beat Police 31-29, 25-20, 25-20 in their final league game. PDB

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The weight of shadows

Elsewhere, the home team, Brazil, were flying, easily making it out of their group. Forwards Jair, Zinho and Ademir were tearing teams apart at will. Uruguay, making their first finals appearance since 1930, made it into the second group phase by beating Bolivia 8-0. Star inside-forward Juan Schiaffino grabbed four goals.

This was to be the only World Cup without a final but the decisive match would come between the aforementioned South Americans. After beating Sweden 7-1 and Spain 6-1 in the final group stage, the Brazilians only needed a draw to take the title that the football-crazy nation was baying for. However, it was not to be.

In front of an 'official' crowd of 199,000 in the specially-built Maracana, Uruguay, with half-backs Obdulio Varela and Victor Andrade outstanding, held off wave after wave of Brazilian attacks for the first-half. But after half-time, the deadlock was broken by Brazilian winger Friaca and destiny seemed to be with the home side. However, Varela began to make his trademark runs forward and Uruguay's right-winger, Ghiggia, began to exert more and more influence.

Ghiggia first beat the defence to play in Schiaffino to score the equaliser. He then delivered the coup de grace by again slipping past full-back Bigode but, instead of crossing, he beat keeper Barbosa at close-range from a narrow angle.

For the whole of Brazil, it was a national disaster and the country collapsed into deep mourning. For Uruguay, a country of just three million people, it was a case of two World Cups entered and two World Cups won.



PHOTO: STAR ARCHIVE
The moment when the shadows began to fall. Schiaffino (extreme left) equalises in the final, watched by (right of the post) the first Englishman to take part in a World Cup final.

Gayle blows India away

CRICINFO, Bridgetown

Chris Gayle finished agonisingly short of becoming the first man to make two international Twenty20 centuries, but by the time he was run-out he had already swiped West Indies to a total that provided too tall for India's batsmen who yet again floundered against the short ball in their Super Eights match of the World Twenty 20 in Barbados yesterday.

The defeat leaves India facing an early exit for the third straight global tournament, and the same questions about batting technique which were raised followed the elimination from last year's World Twenty20 will be asked again.

After Gayle's slaphappy innings in which almost all his runs come on the leg side, India's top-order weren't given anything to drive by West Indies' new-ball bowlers. They faced the barrage of bouncers promised before the match, and even the short deliveries of the gentle medium-pacers Darren Sammy and Dwayne Bravo discomfited them initially.

The home side's fielding was also a dramatic improvement to the error-strewn show against Sri Lanka, with Bravo and Kieron Pollard being

exceptional. India's batting slide started with an athletic forward-diving catch by Pollard at square leg to dismiss opener Murali Vijay, who again failed to replicate his IPL form on the more demanding



PHOTO: AFP
West Indies skipper Chris Gayle drives the ball during the World Twenty20 Super Eights match against India at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown yesterday.

tracks in the Caribbean.

Gautam Gambhir was also having a tough time, and just after edging a bouncer from Kumar Roach in the fifth over between slip and the keeper, he failed to evade a scorching short ball to glove to Denesh Ramdin.

Two overs later Rohit Sharma, the only batsman to enhance his reputation in the pasting by Australia, was controversially dismissed after the ball lobbed off his arm to the keeper. He stood his ground and asked Billy Bowden to call for the third umpire, pointing out that he had not got bat on ball. After consultation with Simon Taufel, Bowden upheld his original decision, and India were down to 38 for 3, and the asking-rate was in double digits.

There were fitful efforts to resuscitate the chase: first by Suresh Raina and Yuvraj Singh, who showed glimpses of their top-class hitting in a 42-run stand, but both holed out in the space of five deliveries. MS Dhoni and Yusuf Pathan, two of the quickest scorers, swung a few sixes, and with 32 needed off the final two overs, it wasn't only the most one-eyed of fans who were hoping for a win. However, Bravo's slide-rule throw from long-on ended Dhoni's stay and with it, the big crowd in Barbados knew an important win was sealed.

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Chelsea champions in style

AFP, London



Chelsea reclaimed the English Premier League title in style on Sunday, a 8-0 win over Wigan ensuring they pipped

Manchester United by a single point after racking up a record haul of 103 goals.

As well as denying United what would have been an unprecedented fourth consecutive title, the stunning display ensured Carlo Ancelotti's first season in charge ends with the league

trophy back in west London for the first time since Jose Mourinho masterminded back-to-back triumphs in 2004-05 and 2005-06.

The defending champions did their job by beating Stoke 4-0 at Old Trafford but there was never any prospect of Chelsea falling at the final hurdle.



PHOTO: AFP
Chelsea's inspirational Ivorian striker Didier Drogba (L) is the toast of his teammates after scoring the fifth goal against Wigan Athletics in the virtual championship-deciding match of the English Premier League at Stamford Bridge in London yesterday. Drogba scored a hatrick in Chelsea's 8-0 mauling of Wigan.

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Too easy for tourists

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Stiaan van Zyl and Dean Elgar made South Africa A's 6-wicket win over Bangladesh A look ridiculously easy at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The left-handed pair shared an undefeated 108-run fifth wicket stand to take the visitors home with an over to spare, after Bangladesh A made a modest 244 all out in 49.2 overs.

This was the third consecutive defeat for the second-string home side that also a suffered humiliating 203-run defeat last Wednesday against the same opponents and lost to West Indies A on Saturday by 29 runs.

Opener van Zyl carried his bat throughout the chase, making 109 from 154 balls but he was extremely lucky to survive two dropped catches by Nazmul Hossain Milon and Dollar Mahmud, with the latter spilling one of the easiest chances in recent memory at long-off when all

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Premier League from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna District Sports Association (KDSA) will hold the Premier Cricket League and First Division Cricket League at the Khulna Stadium from today.

Sixteen teams, eight in each two leagues, will participate in the competition that will continue till May 19.

Social Islami Bank will sponsor the top league for the first time donating KDSA a sum of Tk 160,000.

Colour dress and white balls will be used in the matches for the first time, said senior vice president of KDSA Syed Zahid Hossain. They have also asked for an allocation of Tk 8 crore and 75 lakh

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Abahani warm up well

SPORTS REPORTER



Holders Abahani recorded a moral boosting 4-0 win over Brothers Union in the Bangladesh League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, ahead of their AFC President Cup's campaign.

Sheriff Deen Mohammad struck twice while Enamul Haque and substitute Abul Hossain netted one goal apiece that would no doubt encourage the Sky Blues to do better in the AFC President's Cup, scheduled to be held in Dhaka from May 12.

With their 20th victory in the ongoing professional football league, two-time champions Abahani went close to their hatrick of titles with 61 points from 21 outings. They will now need another four points in their remaining three matches, to be held after the regional tournament, to taste the treble. Abahani's nearest rivals Mohammedan have 52 points from 20 matches.

The full strength Dhanmondi-based outfit pressed hard on the struggling Brothers Union side, and toyed with them in the first half when they scored three goals and even the margin could have been bigger had Sheriff and Enamul not missed a couple of chances.

Abahani could have gone ahead in the sixth minute but referee Tayeb Hasan seemingly ignored a handball by a Brothers defender in the danger zone, but it did not keep them away from scoring goals as Sheriff coolly headed a rebound home in the tenth minute after Brothers goalkeeper Sabuj Das fisted a chip from Awudu Ibrahim.

Sheriff then went close to double the margin when he was well restricted by three Brothers defenders and the ball went to an unmarked Enamul, who blasted the ball home to take him higher in the golden boots competition with 18 goals, two more than his teammate Sheriff.

Four minutes from time, Sheriff headed a Mishu cross into the net to make it 3-0 and raised his goal tally to 16.

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DAY'S EVENT

Asian Games Hockey Qualifiers
Oman v Sri Lanka
Time: 10:00am
Singapore v Hong Kong
Time: 2:00pm
Bangladesh v Taipei
Time: 4:00pm
Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium

Bangladesh League
Sheikh Russel v Mohammedan
Time: 4:00pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

GP-BCB Academy v South Africa Academy
First Twenty20
Time: 9:30am
Venue: BKSP